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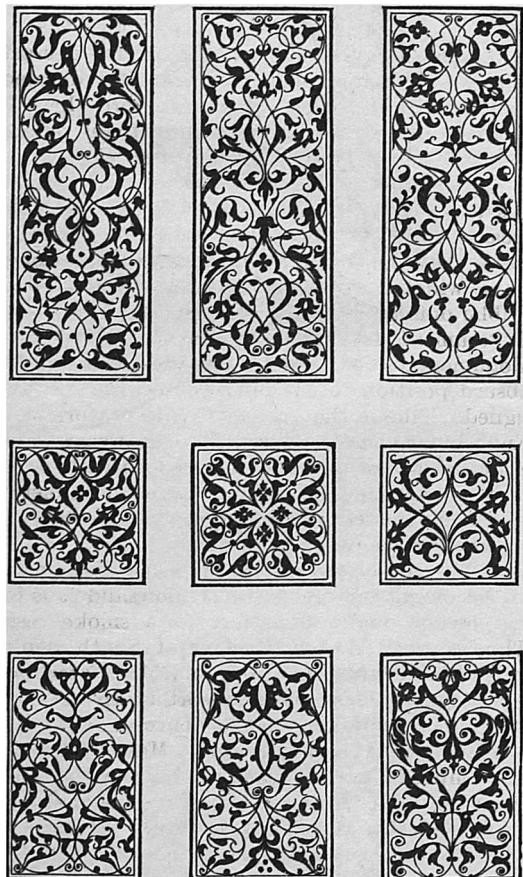
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MARQUETERIE.

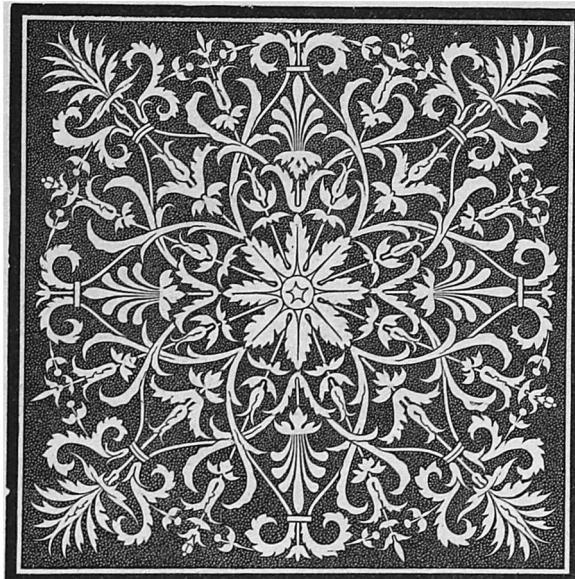
A VENEER composed of different pieces of colored woods, ivory, metals or mother-of-pearl, that may be glued to the surface of furniture, is known as marqueterie, and may be classed with the mosaic in forms of manufacture, and its resemblance to a painting becomes more or less marked as the quality of the work, the sawing and joining, diverges from that point which can be reached by marqueterie artists, and which is almost absolutely perfect in its assimilation of parts. In fact, with the present condition of tools and the admir-



SUGGESTIONS FOR PANEL MARQUETERIE.

able control the worker has over his saw, the joints are made so nicely and the various woods set into each other so cleverly, that it is difficult to persuade a stranger to the art that it is, in truth, a composite of individual fragments.

Yet this perfection is by no means peculiar to this age, and cannot be attributed solely to a ripe and extended experience, for we find the Italian of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries making beautiful work as noticeable as any of to-day; and later, in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was a popular means of ornamentation, and recalling Boulé as one of its master workers, is sufficient evidence to the degree of excellence it there attained; in fact, such attention did this designer think it worth his while to give to it, that he produced one of the most finished and pleasing patterns that we have, and which is known by his own name.



INLAY FOR SQUARE PANEL.

Agreeable with the requirements of the design, the wood is cut or sawed from different thicknesses, made up of sheets of wood each from one-twenty-fourth to one-sixteenth of an inch thick. These sheets are glued together into almost a solid block, and the design being traced upon a piece of paper is pasted upon them. As the ground

work of the inlaid surface is generally a fine repeat, there are many duplicates of the same pattern, and this consideration suggests to the workman the number of wood pieces he shall join together from which to do the cutting. After having prepared the material, as we have shown, a small hole is bored by a fine gimlet in one of the spaces to be cut away, and one of the very small marqueterie saws, which seems almost like a thread of wire so delicate is it, is inserted and both its ends being attached to an arm worked by a treadle, the workman follows the outlines of the pattern with the utmost nicety and care, and the course of the tool is marked by no greater waste than the width of the pen line laid down for its guidance. The suppleness of the steel permits the saw to turn in and out of the smallest curves, marks every angle with distinctness and indicates with accuracy the abruptness of a corner.

This process serves to give the ornament. The ground in which this ornament rests is treated somewhat differently. If, for instance, the ground is black, a duplicate of the pattern we have just described is pasted upon a sheet of black wood, ebony or stained, and its outer edge is cut with the saw the same as was the first. In this, however, the piece cut out is worthless, so far as that design is concerned, whereas, in the previous case, the useless portion was that from which the interior had been removed.

After being cut the sheets are separated by using a long knife-blade inserted between them, and when taken from one another present in each a groundwork and a set of ornaments, for the pieces from the walnut layer may be immediately set into the openings in the satinwood layer directly beneath it. By this means an exact fit in every line is secured.

The pieces are now placed upon paper and glued on to it, and are ready to be put together into the frame or groundwork. A little sawdust from the woods used and a small quantity of glue, join the edges and fill up all the fine openings made undesignedly by the saw. Gradually thus the entire ornament is laid down within the ground on the paper, and when so completed the panel is placed between boards

bearing heavy weights or compressed with a vise, and serving to straighten out the article, which would naturally begin to curl up from the influence of the glue or paste upon it. This pressing together of the inlaid panels serves not only to straighten the piece and prevent curling, but likewise drives the small pieces more evenly together and produces a smooth and regular surface.

In the case of flowers, heads, architectural or other designs, some slight additions, either of lines to indicate stalks, leaf fibre, or the features of the face, are made with a graver and stained, or gradations of a brown color are given, in the case of white or light-tinted woods, by partial burning. It was formerly the custom to burn with a hot iron, but a more delicate tint is given by using hot sand, and this is the best method of tinting beech, lime, holly, box, maple or other woods which are nearly white. There remains nothing but to rough the surfaces of the furniture and lay down the marqueterie on it, precisely as in the case of plain veneering. When the glue is dry and hard the pressure is taken off, the paper on the outer surface is scraped away, and the whole rubbed down and French polished.

The combination in the ornamental figure of wood and metal, brass for example, is quite new and quite successful in its results. Its effect is excellent, and it shows a rich-

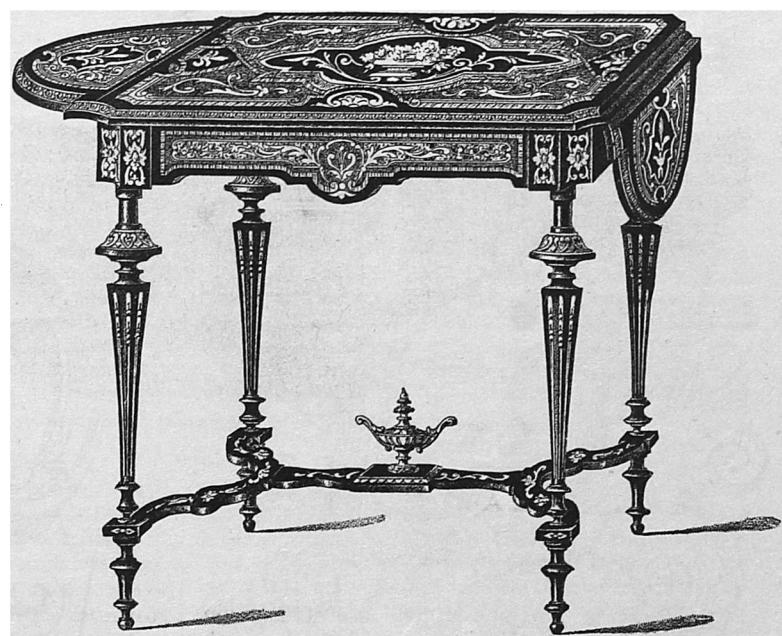


TABLE WITH INLAY OF COLORED WOOD AND BRONZE.

ness that is not unworthy of the French masters. The arrangement of the figures, however, is a matter very much of taste, and very much likewise of the individual preference of the artist. Both Riesener and David used light woods such as maple, holly, box, lime, &c., and laid brown woods, such as laburnum and walnut, on this light ground. Architectural shapes were placed over the doors of secretaires and cabinets, or busts, medallions, baskets of flowers, etc.

The materials used in the best marqueterie are lime, holly, box, beech, poplar for white; pear, laburnum, palm, lignum vitae, walnut, teak, partridge wood for brown; satinwood for yellow; tulip, purple wood, amboyna, thuya, mahogany, logwood, camwood for red, and in Nice a large quantity of orange, olive and other hard woods is used.

The covering of a table-top or application to panels, friezes, etc., is comparatively easy work and not much more difficult than the ordinary labor of veneering, the process being about the same. There are, however, other means of employing marqueterie that tax the ingenuity and skill of the artist, one in particular, that of adapting the inlay to a tapering column, where the pattern must be graduated from bottom to top and the marqueterie wrapped about it, is particularly difficult.



PANEL IN INLAY, BORROWED FROM "THE JOURNAL OF DECORATIVE ART."